



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa Fishing Report

Conservation and Recreation

PERFECT STOCKING STUFFER
FOR THE HOLIDAYS!



2024 LICENSES ON SALE DEC. 15

[Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of Dec. 14](#)

- [NORTHWEST](#)
- [NORTHEAST](#)
- [MISSISSIPPI RIVER](#)
- [SOUTHEAST](#)
- [SOUTHWEST](#)

NORTHWEST

[Black Hawk Lake](#)

The lake has had skim ice throughout last week. Most shoreline areas are covered with thin ice. The area around the fish house in Town bay is kept ice-free with a water agitator to provide open water fishing opportunities. **Black Crappie** - Fair: There is open water at the fish house in Town Bay; use a small jig to pick up crappie. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Try a small jig or a piece of crawler under a bobber in the fish house in Town Bay.

[Brushy Creek Lake](#)

The lake is ice-free. Courtesy docks are removed for the season.

[Storm Lake \(incl Little Storm Lake\)](#)

Storm Lake is partially ice covered. Most shoreline areas have skim ice; fishing opportunities are limited. **Unsafe ice**; too thin to walk on.

Shoreline fishing is limited with skim ice on most area lakes. Any ice in the district is too thin to walk on. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

Blue Pit

Rainbow Trout - Good: Use spinnerbaits and small jigs. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

Clear Lake

Ice thickness is 0 to 4 inches. **Ice fishing is not recommended.** Clear Lake has a protected slot on walleye. All walleye between 17 and 22 inches must be immediately released unharmed. No more than one walleye longer than 22-inches may be taken per day. **Yellow Perch** - Fair.

Crystal Lake

The aeration system is running. Ice thickness is 0 to 4 inches. **Ice fishing is not recommended.**

Rice Lake

Ice thickness is 0 to 4 inches. **Ice fishing is not recommended.**

Silver Lake (Worth)

The aeration system is running. Ice thickness is 0 to 4 inches. **Ice fishing is not recommended.**

For information on the lakes and rivers in north central Iowa, contact the Clear Lake Fish and Wildlife office at 641-357-3517.

East Okoboji Lake

The lake is almost entirely ice covered. Very few areas offer safe ice fishing opportunities. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Use minnows and plastics. **Bluegill** - Fair: Try a small hook and piece of worm. In deeper water, use pilkies with wigglers or a slip bobber setup. **Walleye** - Fair. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Sorting will most likely be needed.

Ingham Lake

The lake is mostly iced up, but has a large open area that has been kept open due to waterfowl. **Walleye** - Fair: Anglers have been successful morning and evening.

Lost Island Lake

The lake is almost entirely iced up. **Black Crappie** - Fair. **Walleye** - Fair: Anglers have been successful fishing from shorelines in the evenings.

Minnewashta Lake

Black Crappie - Fair: Try slowly trolling over vegetation with minnows and plastics. **Bluegill** - Fair. **Pumpkinseed** - Good.

Scharnberg Pond

Rainbow trout were stocked recently. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

Silver Lake (Dickinson)

Black Bullhead - Good. **Walleye** - Fair: Expect the walleye bite to improve with falling water temperatures.

Spirit Lake

The lake has about 50 percent ice coverage. The current water level is 9 inches below crest. The crappie bite has been good. **Black Crappie** - Good: Minnows and plastics work well. Many nice-sized fish have been seen lately. **Bluegill** - Good: Try a small hook and a small piece of worm. In deeper water, use pilkies with wigglers or a slip bobber setup. **Walleye** - Good: Minnows work well. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Find good numbers; may need to sort for size.

West Okoboji Lake

The lake is mostly open, but ice has started to form in many bays. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Try small jigs tipped with a minnow. **Bluegill** - Good: Use pilkies with wigglers or a slip bobber setup. **Pumpkinseed** - Good: **Walleye** - Good: Minnows and plastics work well. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Sorting may be needed.

Most area water levels are a few inches below crest. Most smaller lakes are covered in a thin layer of ice. Warm conditions during the day have delayed ice production. Some bays have thicker ice; fishing access can be hard to find. Check ice thickness often if you go out on the water. For current conditions, call the Spirit Lake District Office at 712-336-1840.

NORTHEAST

Cedar River (above Nashua)

Ice conditions are changing fast with warmer temperatures. **Unsafe Ice conditions.** **Walleye** - Good: Find walleye below the dams; use minnows, crawlers or spinnerbaits.

Decorah District Streams

Trout stream stocking is complete until next April. Staff thanks trout anglers and supporters for making this season fun and rewarding. Brown and brook trout nests, or redds, are in streams; avoid walking on these areas. Many trout streams run through public areas open to hunting. **Brook Trout** - Fair: Be stealthy approaching streams. Water clarity is excellent. Find fish in deeper pools above beaver dams. **Brown Trout** - Fair: Anglers may have to be more stealthy when approaching streams due to clear water. Flip a fly along the edge of vegetation. Try flies imitating minnows or other small fish. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: Use a small chunk of worm or cheese under a bobber fished through a deeper hole.

Lake Hendricks

Warmer temperatures are creating **unsafe ice conditions**. Open water around the aerator.

Lake Meyer

Warmer temperatures are creating **unsafe ice conditions**.

Turkey River (above Clermont)

Ice conditions are changing fast with warmer temperatures. **Unsafe ice conditions**.

Upper Iowa River (above Decorah)

Water levels remain low and steady. Areas with low flow are iced over. **Rainbow Trout** - Slow: Use lures imitating small minnows below the dams. **Walleye** - Slow: Try a crankbait or jig tipped with a minnow below the dams.

Volga Lake

Warmer temperatures are creating **unsafe ice conditions**.

Water levels on area rivers and streams are below normal for this time of year. Weekend weather in the 40s for highs to 30s overnight with a slight chance for showers Friday evening into Saturday. Second shotgun deer season ends on Sunday. For current fishing information, please call the Chuck Gipp Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

Cedar River (Nashua to La Porte City)

Anglers are catching walleye, primarily from shore on the Cedar River in Black Hawk County. **Walleye** - Good: Cast and retrieve lead head jigs tipped with plastics and a minnow.

Shell Rock River (Greene to Shell Rock)

The walleye bite has picked up on the Shell Rock River in Butler County. **Walleye** - Good: Cast and retrieve lead head jigs tipped with plastics. Evening fishing is best.

Wapsipinicon River (Tripoli to Troy Mills)

The walleye bite has picked up on the Wapsipinicon River in Buchanan County. **Walleye** - Good: Cast and retrieve lead head jigs tipped with plastics.

Interior river levels remain low. Anglers are doing good on walleye. Anglers are having success fishing from shore and from boats. Trout streams remain in excellent condition. For further information contact your local bait shops for the most recent information. Contact the Manchester Hatchery at 563-927-3276 for more information.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER

Mississippi River Pool 9

Water level is 8.2 feet at Lansing and is expected to remain stable. Water temperature is near 34 degrees. Lansing Village Creek ramp has been blocked with ice, but some have been breaking ice to get out. **Sauger** - Fair: Sauger have started to move up to the dams. Vertical jig a twister tail or with minnow rig in the tailwaters. **Walleye** - Slow: Vertical jig below the Lock and Dam or use a three-way rig over structure like rock closing dams. Try a jig tipped with a walleye minnow. Walleye slot length limits now apply on the entire Iowa border of the Mississippi River. All walleyes less than 15 inches long and between 20-27 inches must be immediately released. One walleye over 27 inches may be kept. Walleye/sauger combined daily limit 6/possession 12. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Nice perch have been caught near the bottom ends of backwaters.

Mississippi River Pool 10

Water level is 613 feet at Lynxville and is predicted to remain stable. Water temperature is 36 degrees at Lock & Dam 9-Lynxville. **Sauger** - Slow: Sauger have moved into deep water at the dams. Vertical jig a twister tail or with minnow rig in the tailwaters. **Walleye** - Slow: Vertical jig below the Lock and Dam or use a three-way rig over structure like rock closing dams. Try a jig tipped with a walleye minnow. Walleye slot length limits now apply on the entire Iowa border of the Mississippi River. All walleyes less than 15 inches long and between 20-27 inches must be immediately released. One walleye over 27 inches may be kept. Walleye/sauger combined daily limit 6/possession 12. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Nice perch have been caught near the bottom ends of backwaters.

Mississippi River Pool 11

Water level is stable at 4.85 feet below Lock & Dam 10-Guttenberg. Water temperature is 38 degrees. Repairs on the city ramp in Guttenberg have been completed; the ramp is **open**. **Sauger** - Fair: Sauger have moved into deep water at the dams. Vertical jig a twister tail or with minnow rig in the tailwaters. **Walleye** - Slow: Vertical jig below the Lock and Dam or use a three-way rig over structure like rock closing dams. Try a jig tipped with a walleye minnow. Walleye slot length limits now apply on the entire Iowa border of the Mississippi River. All walleyes less than 15 inches long and between 20-27 inches must be immediately released. One walleye over 27 inches may be kept. Walleye/sauger combined daily limit 6/possession 12. **Yellow Perch** - Fair: Nice perch have been caught near the bottom ends of backwaters.

Upper Mississippi River levels are extremely low and are expected to remain stable. Water temperatures have fallen into the mid-30s. The bite has slowed with

the colder temperatures. Panfish have moved into backwater lakes to prepare for winter. Skim ice is forming on backwaters, but is not yet thick enough for ice fishing. Walleye sauger fishing remains slower; reports of better catches. Live bait has been most successful. **NOTICE:** Repairs on the city ramp in Guttenberg have been completed.

Mississippi River Pool 12

The river is stable at Dubuque at 4.9 feet at Lock and Dam 11 and 7.6 feet at the railroad bridge. Water temperature is around 34 degrees. Water clarity is good. Some icing has occurred; ramps remain open and warmer weather is expected. **Black Crappie** - No Report: Crappie fishing was decent this fall. With the ice transition, we haven't received any reports on crappies for the past few weeks. **Largemouth Bass** - No Report: Concentrate in warm sunlit areas in backwater habitats. Spinnerbaits and chatterbaits often work well even when temperatures are in the upper 30s. Slow your retrieve. **Sauger** - Slow: Very nice sauger are being caught in the tailwater mostly on a jig and minnow rig. The bite has slowed from what it was a few weeks ago. **Smallmouth Bass** - Slow: Try heavy jigs or one-eyes in moderate current on the wing-dams. No report this week; they were still biting well a week ago when temperatures were in the 40s. **Walleye** - Slow: Most anglers are targeting the tailwaters with jigging spoons or jig and minnow rigs. Not much is being reported, but conditions are good. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Nice 12-inch plus perch are being reported from backwater areas and shallower water in the tailwaters.

Mississippi River Pool 13

The water level is stable and near 4.8 feet at Lock and Dam 13. Water clarity is good. Water temperature is around 36 degrees. Water levels are low enough that backing off the ends of the ramps will become an issue again. Use the minimum amount of ramp necessary to launch your boat. **Black Crappie** - No Report: Crappie fishing was decent this fall. With the ice transition, we haven't received any reports on crappies for the past few weeks. **Largemouth Bass** - No Report: Bass have moved into backwater areas for the winter. Try spinnerbaits and chatterbaits very slowly in sunlit areas. **Rainbow Trout** - Excellent: The kids trout pond north of the DNR fisheries station is stocked with trout and can provide fun action for kids throughout the winter. If you plan to keep trout, limit yourself to 2 trout per child so we can keep good fishing in the pond throughout the winter. **Sauger** - Fair: Nice sauger are being caught in the tailwater mostly on a jig and minnow rig or jigging spoons. The bite seems inconsistent with some anglers doing well and others poorly. **Smallmouth Bass** - Slow: Try tips of wing-dams in moderate currents. Try a little more vertical jigging in cold water. Smallies were still on the bite last week when temperatures were in the 40s. **Walleye** - Slow: Walleye are being caught on

jig and minnow rigs and jigging spoons in the tailwaters. Both the City boat ramp and the DNR boat ramp are open. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Healthy 9-inch yellow perch were reported along vegetation lines and bush piles. Some ring perch are also showing up in 10 feet or so water in the tailwaters.

[Mississippi River Pool 14](#)

The water level is stable at Fulton at near 4.6 feet, 9.2 feet at Camanche and near 4.3 feet at LeClair. Temperature is around 37 degrees. Water levels may get low enough that backing off the ends of the ramps may become an issue again. **Black Crappie** - No Report: Crappie fishing was decent this fall. With the ice transition, we haven't received any reports on crappies for the past few weeks. **Largemouth Bass** - No Report: Bass have moved into backwater areas. Try chatterbaits or spinnerbaits in slack sunlit backwaters. Use a very slow presentation. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Use gaudy white spinnerbaits in backwater areas. **Sauger** - Fair: Nice sauger are being caught in the tailwater mostly on a jig and minnow rig or jigging spoon. The bite has tailed off from where we were three weeks ago. **Walleye** - Slow: Walleyes have moved toward the tailwaters and upstream wing-dams. Most anglers are using a jig and minnow combination. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Some yellow perch are being caught with red worms along exposed vegetation lines. Lots of small fish with an occasional keeper. Some nice ring perch were taken out of the tailwater in about 10 feet of water.

[Mississippi River Pool 15](#)

The water level is stable and near 4.9 feet at Rock Island. Water clarity is good. Water temperature is 37 degrees. Water levels may get low enough that backing off the ends of the ramps may become an issue again. **Sauger** - Slow: Expect some angling to take place in the tailwater with anglers mainly using jig and minnow rigs.

Water levels are low and stable. Water temperatures are still around 37 degrees. Some minor icing; boat ramps remain open. Low levels elevate concern about backing off the back of ramps; use the minimum amount of ramp necessary to launch your boat. If you have angling questions, please call Bellevue Fisheries Management at 563-880-8781.

[Mississippi River Pool 16](#)

Tailwater stage is 4.91 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities and is fairly steady. Backwaters are starting to ice over. **Unsafe ice conditions.** **Sauger** - Fair: There has been some sauger fishing in Sylvan Slough and below the Lock and Dam. Try jigs and minnows or jigs and crawlers.

[Mississippi River Pool 17](#)

Tailwater stage is 3.81 feet at Lock and Dam 16 at Muscatine and is fairly steady. The docks are still in the water at Muscatine; there has been some tailwater

fishing. Backwaters are starting to ice up. Big Timber has some skim ice with areas of open water. **Unsafe ice conditions. Sauger** - Fair: Reports of saugers being caught below the Lock and Dam on jigs and crawlers. It has been mostly smaller fish with keeper-sized fished mixed in.

[Mississippi River Pool 18](#)

Tailwater stage is 3.73 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston and is fairly steady. Backwaters are starting to ice up. **Unsafe ice conditions. Sauger** - Fair: There has been some tailwater fishing for saugers below the dam. Try jigs and crawlers or minnows. It has been mostly smaller fish with keeper-sized fished mixed in.

[Mississippi River Pool 19](#)

Tailwater stage is 1.65 feet at Lock and Dam 18 and is fairly steady. We have not received any fishing reports for this pool this week.

Tailwater stages have been fairly steady. Main channel water temperature is around 35 degrees. Water clarity is fair. There has been some tailwater fishing for walleye and sauger. Backwaters are starting to ice up. **Unsafe ice conditions.** If you have questions on fishing Pools 16-19 contact the Fairport Fish Hatchery at 563-263-5062.

SOUTHEAST

[Big Hollow Lake](#)

Areas of ice with other spots still open water. The boat ramp bay is frozen over with a layer of thin ice most of the time.

[Lake Belva Deer](#)

Still ice on a good portion of the lake. Some open water, especially where the sun and warm air can get to it during the afternoons.

[Lake Darling](#)

Large sheets of thin ice forms at night on the main body of the lake and melts during the warmest afternoons. Open water around the main boat ramp.

[Lost Grove Lake](#)

The gates at the boat ramp at the dam are closed for the season. The docks have been pulled for the winter. With the warm weather and the forecast for rain, a lot of the ice will melt opening up more open water. Lost Grove Lake has had Eurasian watermilfoil; clean all vegetation off your boat and trailer before leaving the boat ramp area.

For more information on the above lakes and rivers call the Lake Darling Fisheries Office at 319-694-2430.

[Coralville Reservoir](#)

There is skim ice on the mid-section of the lake.

[Lake Macbride](#)

Any size motor may be operated at 5 mph. Most of the lake skimmed over on the morning of Dec. 14, but that may not last long. Water temperatures are in the upper 30s. Most docks have been removed; there is a dock remaining at Main Ramp and Anglers Point Ramp. There are also permanent loading slips at Main Ramp and Opie Ave Ramp. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Try minnows over brush piles or stumps in 15-20 feet of water. **Muskellunge** - Slow: Look for fish chasing bait. Most fish are suspended over deeper water. **Walleye** - Slow: Jigging drop offs or casting to windblown rock banks has produced a few fish. **Wiper (Hybrid Striped Bass)** - Fair: Look in deeper water or wind-blown banks.

[Pleasant Creek Lake](#)

The water temperatures are in the upper 30s. The docks were pulled this week. The modern bathroom and fish cleaning station are closed for the season. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Try fishing minnows over brush piles. **Muskellunge** - Slow: **Walleye** - Slow: Use jigs or live bait along rock in 10-20 feet of water.

[Wapsipinicon River \(Troy Mills to Oxford Junction\)](#)

The backwaters have skim ice. This winter there will be a dredging project in the backwaters of Pinicon Ridge Park that will affect ice fishing.

Some lakes have skim ice from day to day. For more information, contact the Lake Macbride Fisheries Station at 319-624-3615.

[Hawthorn Lake](#)

Very little fishing pressure this past week.

[Lake Miami](#)

Very little fishing activity. Try small jigs as the water cools.

[Lake Sugema](#)

Very little fishing activity with the colder temperatures. Skim ice is forming on cold nights around the shoreline and in the coves.

[Lake Wapello](#)

Very little fishing activity. Skim ice is forming around the shorelines and in the bays

during the cold nights.

[Ottumwa Park Pond South \(Trout Pond\)](#)

Skim ice is forming around the shorelines on the colder nights. Trout were stocked recently. Try a small tube, in-line spinners, or a piece of nightcrawler. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

[Rathbun Reservoir](#)

The current lake level is 902.41 msl; recreation pool is 904 msl. Prairie Ridge boat ramp and campground are closed for the season. Bridgeview campground is closed. but the boat ramp is open. Island View dedication site boat ramp and Island View West ramp are closed. Lake Rathbun has zebra mussels so make sure to properly drain, clean and dry equipment before transporting to another waterbody. **Walleye** - No Report: There is a 15-inch minimum length limit on walleye at Lake Rathbun. All walleyes measuring less than 15 inches must be immediately released unharmed.

[Red Haw Lake](#)

Park visitors are asked to avoid the campground area due to the continued storm damage cleanup. Very little fishing activity has been reported.

Contact the Rathbun Fish Hatchery at 641-647-2406 with questions about fishing in south central Iowa.

SOUTHWEST

[Ada Hayden Heritage Park Lake](#)

Rainbow Trout - Fair: Cast in-line spinners, small spoons, jigs with small twister tails or swimbaits, or live baits under floats. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

[Big Creek Lake](#)

All docks except the Williams Drive Ramp have been removed. **Walleye** - Fair: Try jigging shad imitating plastics in 12 feet of water or less in the upper half of the lake. Fish off rock jetties in the evenings or find humps that come up to 3 to 6 feet from the surface.

[Lake Petocka](#)

Rainbow Trout - Fair: Cast in-line spinners, small spoons jigs with small twister tails or swimbaits, or live baits under floats. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

Terra Lake

As of Dec. 14, Terra Lake was covered in thin ice. With warm temperatures in the forecast, the lake may have open water again by the weekend. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: Cast in-line spinners, small spoons jigs with small twister tails or swimbaits, or live baits under floats. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

Triumph Park East

As of Dec. 14 the pond was covered in thin ice. With warm temperatures in the forecast, the lake may have open water again by the weekend. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: Cast in-line spinners, small spoons jigs with small twister tails or swimbaits, or live baits under floats. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

Triumph Park West

As of December 14 the pond was covered in thin ice. With warm temperatures in the forecast, the lake may have open water again by the weekend. **Rainbow Trout** - Fair: Cast in-line spinners, small spoons jigs with small twister tails or swimbaits, or live baits under floats. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout.

For information on central Iowa lakes and rivers contact Ben Dodd at 641-891-3795 or Andy Otting at 515-204-5885.

Three Mile Lake

Lake level is 8 feet below normal pool. The lake will be up to 8 feet below normal pool for the rest of 2023.

West Lake (Osceola)

Main boat ramps are closed due to low water conditions.

Large lakes are open; some skim ice on smaller lakes, especially in the mornings. Water temperature in most Mount Ayr district lakes is in the upper 30s to low 40s. For more information, call the Mount Ayr Fisheries office at 641-464-3108.

RECOMMENDED MINIMUM ICE THICKNESS

(rough guidelines for new clear ice ONLY)

2" or less
**STAY
OFF!**



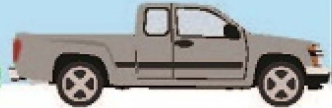
4"
Ice Fishing



5" **Snowmobile
or ATV**



8"-12"
**Car or Small
Pickup Truck**



12"-15"
**Medium
Truck**

